

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY
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AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MANAMA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
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TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 492 - FEBRUARY 1, 1978

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING
PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY
OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

SECRET/NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS

1. ME-USSR. MOSCOW IS MAKING CLEAR ITS DISPLEASURE OVER THE RENEWED SIGNS OF LIFE IN THE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI DIALOGUE AND OVER WASHINGTON'S CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR THAT EFFORT. THE SOVIET MEDIA ARE CONTINUING THEIR PORTRAYAL OF SADAT AS AN AMERICAN STOOGE AND HAVE ALREADY DENIGRATED HIS UPCOMING WASHINGTON VISIT AS A "POINTLESS" EXERCISE AIMED AT CAMOUFLAGING PLANS FOR AN "AMERICAN-STYLE" SEPARATE PEACE WITH ISRAEL. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE HAS BEEN NO LET-UP IN MOSCOW'S EFFORT TO WEAKEN AND ISOLATE SADAT THROUGH REPEATED CHARGES THAT HE IS SELLING OUT PALESTINIAN AND ARAB INTERESTS.

2. MEANWHILE, THE MORE ACERBIC TREATMENT OF US MIDDLE EAST POLICY CONTINUES. ECHOING INTERMEDIATE CHARGES BY POLITBURO CANDIDATE MEMBER PONOMAREV IN WASHINGTON LAST

WEEK THAT US ACTIONS HAVE "UNILATERALLY REPUDIATED" THE JOINT US-SOVIET MIDDLE EAST STATEMENT, RADIO MOSCOW COMMENTATOR LOSEV ON JANUARY 27:

(A) ACCUSED WASHINGTON OF "STRAYING FROM ALL THE ARTICLES" OF THE AGREED DOCUMENT;

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(B) CLAIMED THAT ONE OF THE AIMS OF EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI TALKS IS TO EXPEL THE USSR FROM THE MIDDLE EAST; AND

(C) WARNED THAT PEACE IS POSSIBLE ONLY IF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE US COOPERATE AS CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

3. BEYOND TALK, HOWEVER, THERE IS LITTLE INDICATION THAT THE SOVIETS FOR THE PRESENT SEE ANYTHING THEY CAN DO TO SHAPE DEVELOPMENTS. EVEN IN PUBLIC POSITIONS, MOSCOW CAREFULLY AVOIDS ENDORSING RADICAL REJECTIONIST ARAB VIEWS. THUS, SOVIET MEDIA SO FAR HAVE GIVEN MINIMAL ATTENTION TO PLANS OF SADAT'S OPPONENTS FOR A SUMMIT MEETING IN ALGIERS ON FEBRUARY 2. MOSCOW SEEMS RESIGNED FOR THE PRESENT TO BEING KEPT ON THE MIDDLE EAST SIDELINES AND HAS EVIDENTLY CONCLUDED THAT ITS LONG-TERM INTERESTS WILL BE BEST SERVED BY MILITANTLY STALLING ON PEACE TERMS; KEEPING DIPLOMATIC LINES OPEN TO THE ARAB OPPONENTS OF SADAT'S POLICIES; AND TRYING TO MAINTAIN GENERALIZED DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT FOR THE POSITIONS OF SADAT'S OPPONENTS. (CONFIDENTIAL)

4. PLO. ACCORDING TO A SOURCE OF EMBASSY DAMASCUS, ARAFAT WENT TO SAUDI ARABIA RECENTLY TO DEAL WITH TWO MAIN TOPICS: SOLVING THE ABU HISHAM ISSUE (PLO'S RIYADH REPRESENTATIVE WHO IS CONSIDERED BY MANY PLO LEADERS AS A SAUDI STOOGE); AND DISCUSSING THE POSSIBILITY OF SAUDI ARABIA BEGINNING EFFORTS TO CONVENE A BROAD-BASED ARAB SUMMIT TO RECONCILE THE ARABS. THERE IS NO RELIABLE INFORMATION ON THE RESULTS OF ARAFAT'S VISIT.

5. EMBASSY DAMASCUS ALSO LEARNED THAT PALESTINIAN LEADER KHALID AL-HASAN HAD BROKEN OFF HIS VISIT TO SYRIA ON JANUARY 25 AND HAD HURRIED BACK TO BEIRUT UPON RECEIVING WORD THAT "THE PLO HAS RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM KING HUSSEIN." THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS THAT THE KING IS
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WILLING TO REOPEN JORDAN'S DIALOGUE WITH THE PLO, BUT THIS IS THE FIRST INDICATION THAT HE MAY HAVE SEIZED THE INITIATIVE. (CONFIDENTIAL)

6. KUWAIT. SHEIKH SAAD AL-ABDULLAH AL-SABAH WAS NAMED KUWAITI CROWN PRINCE YESTERDAY BY EMIR JABIR AL-AHMAD. SAAD AL-ABDULLAH, WHO IS IN HIS EARLY 50S, HAS BEEN DEFENSE AND INTERIOR MINISTER FOR THE PAST DOZEN YEARS BUT WAS THOUGHT TO BE BARRED FROM THE SUCCESSION BECAUSE HIS MOTHER WAS A BLACK NON-KUWAITI SLAVE.

7. SAAD IS CLOSE TO THE EMIR BUT IS NOT ON GOOD TERMS WITH ACTING PRIME MINISTER JABIR AL-ALI. HIS APPOINTMENT IS PROBABLY THE RESULT OF INTENSE BARGAINING AMONG THE VARIOUS MEMBERS OF THE SABAH FAMILY. HE HAS THE REPUTATION OF BEING A CONCILIATOR WITHIN THE RULING FAMILY. AS DEFENSE AND INTERIOR MINISTER, SAAD SUPPORTED THE GOVERNMENT'S NONALIGNMENT POLICY AND EMPHASIZED THAT KUWAIT IS WILLING TO PURCHASE ARMS FROM ANY SOURCE. HIS VIEWS ON MIDDLE EASTERN ISSUES ARE CONVENTIONAL, BUT HE HAS NOT BEEN TOLERANT OF PALESTINIAN ACTIVITIES WITHIN KUWAIT. (SECRET/NOFORN)

8. MOROCCO. THE GOVERNMENT APPARENTLY TOOK DELIVERY RECENTLY OF ADDITIONAL HOWITZERS LAST MONTH FROM FRANCE AND THE UK. A NUMBER OF FRENCH 155-MM SELF-PROPELLED F-3 HOWITZERS WERE DELIVERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH AN AGREEMENT SIGNED LAST YEAR FOR A TOTAL OF 36 F-3'S. ALSO, TWELVE BRITISH 105-MM TOWED HOWITZERS WERE SENT IN COMPLIANCE WITH CONTRACTS SIGNED IN 1975 AND 1977. THESE ACQUISITIONS REFLECT CONTINUING MOROCCAN EFFORTS TO INCREASE AND UPGRADE ITS MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO COUNTER THE ALGERIAN THREAT AND TO FIGHT THE POLISARIO IN THE FORMER
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SPANSIH SAHARA. THE TOWED HOWITZERS ARE TO BE ASSIGNED TO A MOROCCAN ARTILLERY GROUP IN EL AAIUN, AND THE FRENCH SELF-PROPELLED HOWITZERS ARE EXPECTED TO REPLACE TOWED 105-MM WEAPONS IN NORTHEASTERN MOROCCO, NEAR THE ALGERIAN BORDER. ALTHOUGH THE LACK OF WEAPONS STANDARDIZATION MAY CAUSE SOME LOGISTICS PROBLEMS FOR THE MOROCCAN ARMY, THE GREATER MOBILITY AND LONGER RANGE OF THESE GUNS SHOULD IMPROVE OVERALL COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS. (CONFIDENTIAL/NOFORN) VANCE

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